

OUR LANSING LETTER

Anti-Saloon Men Triumph in Their First Engagement with the Enemy.

HOLMES BILL MAY PASS HOUSE

Passage by the Senate of the Kelly Exemption Bill Causes Surprise—Legislative Notes.

Lansing, Mich., March 24.—The temperance men in the house are very jubilant over the result of their first engagement with the enemy. This scrap took place Thursday afternoon and it is conceded that the honors were all with the so-called anti-saloon men. The bill under consideration was that of Representative Holmes, of Gratiot, which provides that all sureties on liquor bonds must file schedules of their real and personal property in order to show that they are financially responsible for the amount of the obligation they assume under the bond. It is conceded that this measure was introduced at the instance of the state anti-saloon league, so that the line of battle was closely drawn. Parties interested on both sides of the proposition, have been doing a great deal of hard work for and against the bill for several weeks. Those who opposed the bill took the position that men could not be secured to go on these bonds, for the reason that they would decline to make the necessary schedules, and thus lay themselves at the mercy of the assessor. On the other hand, it was admitted that the securing of bondsmen would be made more difficult if the bill passed and that the lower class of saloons would thereby be put out of business.

Brewers Would Control It All.

The opponents of the bill sought to have it amended, by providing that surety companies might furnish bonds for liquor dealers, but the temperance element opposed this on the ground that the brewers would control the entire business. On the motion to amend, the conservatives won by a vote of 45 to 29, and they won again by a decisive vote on the proposition to make the bill a special order for tomorrow afternoon. The indications are that the measure will pass the house, and that this body will never pass a bill permitting surety companies to furnish these bonds.

The passage by the senate of the Kelly bill, exempting real estate mortgages and land contracts from taxation, was considerable of a surprise. It was fought hard, but its introduction succeeded in rounding up just the necessary 17 votes, and it is now in the hands of the house committee on taxation. There is much opposition to it in the house, where it is claimed, that such a law would take \$65,000,000 of credits from the assessment rolls, and also, that it would be unconstitutional. It will be met with the proposition to exempt all credits from taxation, the argument being that there is no reason for exempting this class of credits and taxing all other credits and that such a proposition would not stand the test of the courts. This question is likely to receive very serious consideration before final action is taken. In all probability some change will be made in the existing law, but no one yet knows what form the new law will take.

Punishment for Wife Deserters.

The house judiciary committee has favorably reported Senator Simons' bill, providing for the severe punishment of men who desert their wives and families and leave them to become public charges.

Dr. J. H. Kellogg, of the Battle Creek sanitarium, formerly a member of the state board of health, gave an interesting talk a few evenings since, in support of the bill requiring the rigid inspection of meats offered for sale in this state. He illustrated his remarks with a stereopticon, showing sections of diseased meat which were alive with various kinds of germs. Dr. Kellogg informed the legislators that while cattle for foreign shipment are inspected in Chicago, infected cattle are sold to local dealers and slaughtered for consumption at home. The startling statement that very much of the meat offered for sale in Michigan is diseased was made.

Senator Brown has introduced the upper house to pass his bill, which is designed to protect the creditors of merchants, who are prone to dispose of their stocks of goods in the hope of dodging indebtedness. The bill amends the present law so as to make it mandatory for a merchant, who desires to sell a portion of his stock in bulk, to give his creditors five days' notice of such intention. The apparent object of the measure is to prevent such disposal of stock out of the ordinary and regular course of business for the purpose of defrauding creditors.

Canning and fruit evaporating establishments have heretofore enjoyed immunity from the labor laws, which prohibits the employment of child labor during the months when schools are in session, but the senate has just passed a bill, which makes these establishments amenable to the general law governing this matter. If the house takes like action, children cannot be kept out of school to work in these factories any more than at any other employment.

To Test Ad Valorem Law.

It is stated on excellent authority, that the railroad companies operating

in Michigan, have entered into an agreement to test the new ad valorem tax law. They have agreed, it is understood, to tender payment of taxes on the old specific tax basis and leave the state to sue for the balance due under the ad valorem system. It will be remembered that the new law increased this year's taxes about \$1,300,000 and the companies are naturally averse to paying the increased amount if they can avoid doing so. Thus far the only company to settle under the new law is the Wabash, which has paid the full amount of the ad valorem levy for the very good reason that it was about \$1,000 less than the company paid under the specific tax law last year. The tax of every other company is materially increased under the new law. The constitutionality of the law and the validity of the assessment will both be tested, it is expected, in the contemplated proceedings.

Attorney General Blair and his assistants are hard at work preparing for the trial of the Michigan Central's suit to recover from the state \$6,000,000 damages, for the repeal of its special charter. It is not expected, however, that the case will be tried before next fall, and it may be a full year before it goes to a jury.

The house elections committee has embodied the best features of several primary election bills in a measure, which is known as the Colby-Stone-Powell bill. This bill has been made the special order in the house for Thursday afternoon, at which time the earnest consideration of the general subject of primary elections will be commenced. It will be quite a while before the question is finally disposed of, however.

Bill That Interests Women.

The hundreds of club women in Michigan in particular and the women of the state in general will be interested in a bill which has been perfected by Representative Dennis and is now in the hands of the house committee on state affairs. It aims to make it obligatory upon the governor to appoint at least one woman as a member of the board of control of each state institution of which females are inmates. On boards of three members the bill provides that there shall be one woman, and where there are six members two are to be women. The women who are advocating this bill do so as a matter of justice to the non-voting citizens of the state, and also because they claim that the participation of women in the management of these institutions is absolutely essential to the best interests of the female inmates. As the law reads at present, the governor may appoint women on these boards, but the fact is that thus far only two or three women have been so appointed, and one was displaced by a man at the expiration of her first term. Mrs. May S. Knages of Bay City, who is a member of the board of guardians of the industrial home for girls, is the only woman who has a seat on a state board in Michigan today. The club women of the state are generally back of the movement for greater representation, and it must be confessed that there is much force in the claims they make in behalf of the bill. It is argued that chief executives would be glad if the law were mandatory instead of merely permissive as at present, for then they would have ample excuse for turning down the hordes of male applicants for these places. The women think that if the pressure from the men were not so great, the governors would avail themselves of the opportunity to give the women the representation they seek.

No Appropriation for Monument.

As intimated several weeks ago, there is practically no chance for the passage of the bill appropriating \$250,000 for a soldiers' and sailors' monument. In view of the conceded necessity for additional room for the accommodation of state departments, the senate committee on state affairs has favorably reported a substitute for this measure. The substitute provides for a monument in the shape of a memorial building to cost the sum above mentioned. It is pointed out that this building could be erected on one of the lots owned by the state in this city and made the headquarters for the state military departments, state armory and kindred departments, thus at once forming a substantial memorial and supplying room which is sorely needed.

Another interesting bill that has been favorably reported by the state affairs committee is one providing for the appointment of a state board of architects and for the examination and licensing of architects. In addition to examining candidates for licenses as architects, the board is to hear complaints against licensed architects for incompetency, criminal negligence or carelessness or dishonest practices of any nature in their work. One section requires persons who are employed by private parties to serve as superintendents of construction to procure authority to do so act from licensed architects. Fees for licenses, examinations, etc., are provided, which are calculated to make the board self-sustaining. Notwithstanding this fact the sentiment in the legislature against the creation of any more state boards is so strong that the bill is likely to go into the scrap heap.

Little Hope for Doherty Bill.

There does not appear to be much hope for the Doherty bill, making appropriation for the establishment of a separate home for epileptics, if anything is done in this line it will probably be in the direction of purchasing additional land and providing additional buildings at the present home for the feeble-minded and epileptics at Lapeer.

JAMES V. BARRY.

COLLISION IN A FOG

Kills the Lives of Six Persons on a Sound Steamer and Wounds a Larger Number.

New London, Conn., March 21.—Traveling at a moderate rate of speed through Long Island sound early yesterday, the passenger steamer Plymouth, of the L. I. River line, bound for Fall River from New York, and the freight steamer City of Taunton, of the same line, came into collision in the fog just east of the Plum Island, the bow of the freight steamer striking the starboard side of the Plymouth and causing the death of six of those on board the Plymouth, and serious injury to a number of others.

The dead are: John P. McCarthy, watchman, Fall River; unidentified passenger, probably G. H. Marston, Pater-son, N. J.; J. Coleman, negro pantryman; Julius Lawson, negro messman; John H. Williams, negro baker; John Briscoe, negro pantryman. The complete list of injured is impossible to obtain, but the worst case is that of David Samuelson, of New Bedford, a negro, whose right arm is crushed from his body. The responsibility for the accident has not been determined.

RATHBONE'S EFFORT IN VAIN

Secretary Root Refuses to Call on General Wood to Reply to Rathbone's Charges—No Action To Be Taken.

Washington, March 24.—Secretary Root yesterday took official action on the charges made by Estes G. Rathbone against Brigadier General Leonard Wood. He made an indorsement on the papers saying that no answer to the charges was required from General Wood, and no action will be taken thereon; that it was known to the secretary of war that the charges in every respect were without just foundation.

The secretary refers to the part taken by the military governor in the postoffice cases, in which Rathbone was a defendant, saying that General Wood at every step had the approval of the secretary of war and exercised only such control as was necessary as military governor. He refers to the game of jai alai, and declares that the gift accepted by General Wood had no relation whatever to any official action of his and that its acceptance was perfectly proper.

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